



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 12

Date 1-31-07

Bill No. SB 142

January 30, 2007

The Honorable Dan Weinberg
Chairman, Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Safety Committee
Montana State Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Re: SB 142 Public Health Emergency Act

Dear Senator Weinberg and Members of the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee:

My name is Melanie Reynolds and I am the Health Officer for Lewis and Clark County. The Lewis and Clark Health Department would like to go on record in strong support of SB 142, a bill that will assist our county in preparing and responding to a public health emergency. Also, I am here today on behalf of the Montana Local Health Officers Group which includes Health Officers from Missoula, Yellowstone, Cascade, Butte-Silverbow, Flathead, and Gallatin counties.

Yesterday, state and Lewis and Clark County public health, school, and emergency preparedness officials discussed how we would plan and respond to specific issues related to pandemic flu. A public health emergency, as defined by this legislation, such as pandemic flu, would overwhelm locally available resources and the event would impact a multi-county region or the entire state. This bill would clarify the role of DPHHS in a disaster or emergency of this magnitude. It would require the DPHHS plan to be consistent with existing plans of other state and local response partners. It was clear in our discussions yesterday that the provisions of SB 142 does not negate or diminish the authority of local government officials and local public health officials to perform our duties.

The bill also addresses reviewing and honoring the licenses of out-of-state health care and other public health providers. This would be incredibly important in assisting our community in responding to a large public health event.

We urge your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Melanie Reynolds, M.P.H.
Health Officer

"To Improve and Protect the Health of all Lewis and Clark County Residents."